



Internship Opportunity: Durham VA Pharmacy VALOR Program

What is VALOR?

VALOR, or Veterans Affairs Learning Opportunities Residency, is an honors program that provides opportunities for outstanding pharmacy students to develop competencies in pharmacy practice while working at a VA healthcare facility. The VALOR program focuses on the development of skills and knowledge required for pharmacy practice by providing competency-based practice experiences under the supervision of a clinical pharmacist preceptor.

Durham VA Medical Center Information

Established in 1953, the Durham VA Medical Center (VAMC) is a 271-bed tertiary care referral, teaching and research facility affiliated with Campbell University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, the University of North Carolina Eshelman School of Pharmacy, , Duke University School of Medicine, and Durham Technical Institute. The Durham VAMC provides general and specialty medical, surgical, psychological, psychiatric inpatient and ambulatory services, and serves as a major referral center for North Carolina, southern Virginia, northern South Carolina, and eastern Tennessee. The medical center is a regional center for radiation therapy, neurosurgery, therapeutic endoscopy, and other special procedures. In addition, it serves as a referral center for high-risk open-heart surgery cases, angioplasty, and hemodynamic cardiac catheterization. The 100-bed Community Living Center is reflective of an ongoing emphasis on wellness, preservation of functions, and rehabilitation, and includes a 10 bed hospice unit providing end of life care. Special programs at Durham include a comprehensive Women's Health Center; a Home Based Primary Care program; a Telemedicine Home Care program; a Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical Center; the Center for Health Services Research in Primary Care; the VISN 6 Mental Illness Research, Education, and Clinical Center, and the Epidemiology Research and Information Center. The Durham VAMC also serves as the support facility for the

National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, the Performance Assessment Center for Excellence, and the Employee Education Service.

Program Description

- Number of Positions: 2
- Appointment Period: Approximately 40 hours per week for 10 weeks during the summer months; potential for a two year commitment; anticipated start date early June
- Areas may include: outpatient/inpatient pharmacy, formulary management, ambulatory care medication management, home based primary care, geriatrics, infectious disease, oncology, women's health, anticoagulation, internal medicine, critical care/nutrition, emergency medicine, drug information, medication safety, and research
- Educational Opportunities: medical center and pharmacy resident orientation, projects, multidisciplinary team meetings, grand rounds, case/drug monograph presentations, topic discussions, book/journal clubs, patient education and medication counseling, shadow experiences, restricted medication evaluation

Benefits

- Highly competitive salary
- Flexible; tailored to students interest
- Exposure to federal pharmacy practice
- Potential to be hired above minimum entry salary after graduation
- Professional networking opportunities
- Veteran population with unique medical and psychological needs
- Experience both distributive and clinical VA pharmacy services

Eligibility Criteria

- Completion of 2nd year of an accredited school or college of pharmacy
- Minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale on coursework taken in pharmacy school
- United States citizen
- Meet physical examination standards if selected
- Able to complete 400 hours during the summer at 40 hours per week for 10 weeks (typically June-September), and availability to fulfill the potential two year commitment
- Able to provide own housing

****NOTE: Students with a service obligation to any Federal, State, or private institution, or recipients of any Federal scholarships are ineligible**

Application Process

- Application Packet should include:
 1. Cover letter
 2. Curriculum Vitae
 3. Durham VA Pharmacy VALOR application (access via hyperlink)
 4. Official transcript
 5. Letter of nomination from the Dean/Director of School or College of Pharmacy verifying completion of second year of pharmacy school by May 2015, full-time status, and anticipated graduation within two years of VALOR entry
- Completed applications must be emailed/post-marked by **February 28, 2015** to be considered
- By late March/early April, an interview will be extended to select applicants

****Please submit cover letter, curriculum vitae (CV), and Durham VA Pharmacy VALOR application via email to Marc.Pepin@va.gov. Official transcript and letter of nomination from the Dean/Director will be accepted via mail to the address below**

Contact

Please send completed application or forward inquiries to:

Marc Pepin, Pharm.D., BCPS
Durham VA Medical Center, Pharmacy Department (119)
508 Fulton Street
Durham, NC 27705
Marc.Pepin@va.gov
919-286-0411, ext. 4274

Testimonials

“The VALOR program for me was an unparalleled opportunity. As a pharmacy student, I could not think of a better way to gain the experiences I needed to help me to become a competent practitioner. As a VALOR pharmacy intern, I worked with the formulary management team and gained experiences working through the non-formulary drug consult process, gave bi-weekly presentations, worked on projects that benefitted the entire pharmacy department, and developed my skills in drug information searches. I also gained experience working with the staff pharmacists and technicians and with shadowing the clinical pharmacy specialists in ambulatory care and inpatient medicine. As my internship started at the same time as the new residency class, I was able to attend many of the resident orientation sessions, and gain very valuable insights into the residency application and selection process. As an Army veteran, I was very interested in pursuing a career at the VA. The VA has always been a place where pharmacy is well-respected, and is a progressive place to practice. I felt that my experience as a VALOR intern solidified in me my desire to pursue a career as a VA pharmacist, and helped pave the way for me to become a pharmacy resident within the VA system and later a clinical pharmacy specialist. I would highly recommend this

opportunity to any pharmacy student interested in pursuing a career within the VA system. I have never regretted it!"

-Jonathan Hale, former UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy Student

"I applied for this internship in order to gain first-hand experience working in a hospital setting. I also wanted to investigate further into what it means to be a clinical pharmacist and to witness their role in a multi-disciplinary setting. There were many opportunities to achieve each of these goals plus so much more. From the MUE and SOP projects, to processing restricted medication consults, to giving and attending countless presentations on a variety of topics, I definitely feel as though my summers were well spent. I am very fortunate to have been given this opportunity and I will never forget my experiences here...I have also developed a strong appreciation for the VA healthcare model and all the advantages it holds. The electronic ordering system, the use of barcoding, the application of evidence based medicine, and the central theme of preventative medicine and treating patients for life have definitely set the bar high for the rest of the healthcare system. I take comfort in knowing our veterans are taken care of in a way that they deserve and I hope to take part in their care one day as a VA pharmacist...The VALOR program and the VA have exceeded my expectations."

-Eric Embury, former Campbell University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences Student



Emily Griffin, Courtney Guidry, Heather Coleman, and Emily Mantovani